



## **Workshop on Enhancing Management of Temporary Foreign Labour in Kuwait An Orientation Course for Government and Civil Society Representatives**

**5-19 February 2009, Kuwait  
Venue: Costa Del Sol Hotel – Kuwait**

### **BACKGROUND:**

Like other Gulf countries, Kuwait has long been a destination for overseas temporary contract workers, who currently represent more than sixty per cent of its population and approximately eighty per cent of its labour force. Most of the overseas contract workers originate from the Middle-East (Egypt, Lebanon and Syria) and South and East Asia. An estimated 300,000 domestic helpers, predominately women from Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, India, Indonesia and the Philippines, work in Kuwait.

The dynamics between the labour-sending and Gulf Cooperation Council labour-receiving states result in important economic benefits for both involved parties. However, the high number of overseas contract workers may also give rise to serious issues. The Government of Kuwait recognizes that respect for human rights, the rule of law and core labour standards are essential to political stability and to social and economic development. It has strengthened its commitment to improve the working conditions of and better protect expatriate labourers.

The Government's efforts are complemented by an increasing number of initiatives carried out by civil society organizations, such as the Trade Union Federation and Kuwaiti human rights organisations. It is important to support the Kuwaiti Government's efforts to better identify and further address issues related to human mobility.

### **THE WORKSHOP:**

Within the framework of Abu Dhabi Dialogue and in line with its key partnerships for development between countries of origin and destination, IOM Kuwait hosted a workshop on Enhancing Management of Temporary Foreign Labour in Kuwait: An Orientation Course for Government and Civil Society Representatives aimed to increase the knowledge of relevant Government and civil society representatives on the foundations of migration management, with a specific focus on the authority and responsibilities of states as well as the rights and obligations of mobile populations. The Workshop also aimed to provide a basis for enhanced cooperation and networking between the Government and civil society in light of the interactive dialogue that took place in Abu Dhabi. This workshop was funded by the British embassy and with

support of UNCT in Kuwait and took place in Kuwait during the period 15-19 Feb, 2009.

### PARTICIPANTS:

Over thirty participants were participated in the Workshop from relevant Ministries of the Government of Kuwait, civil society including human rights organisations, trade unions, representatives from the private sector, and diplomatic representation from sending countries.

The event was under the patronage of the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labour (MoSAL). Mr. Mohammed Al-Kindari the Under Secretary of the ministry was invited by IOM to attend the opening and closing ceremonies. High level Kuwait officials from MoSAL, Ministry of Interior (MoI), and Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA) and Ministry of Justice (MoJ) have been participated at the workshop.

### WORKSHOP EXPERTS:

Three IOM experts facilitated the workshop and its discussions and have delivered high level presentations & inputs which met with participant's expectations.

- 1- Mr. Md. Shahidul Haque IOM Regional Representative for the Middle East
- 2- Ms. Elizabeth Warn Labour Migration Specialist, IOM Geneva
- 3- Mr. Tauhid Pasha an International expert in migration management, London the UK

IOM experts have delivered several presentations as indicted at the attached agenda.

### WORKSHOP TOPICS:

- Overview of Labour Mobility in GCC Countries in the Context of Global Mobility
- Bilateral Arrangement for Labour Mobility
- Abu Dhabi Dialogue - Managing Temporary Contractual Labour Mobility
- IOM Recruitment Facilitation of Temporary Foreign Labour ensuring a fair and transparent system protecting workers
- Authority and Responsibility of States
- International Legal Framework for the Protection of Migrant Workers
- Group discussion on: Enhancing knowledge in the areas of labour market trends, temporary foreign workers, and their interplay with development in Kuwait
- Mr. Jamal Al-Dousari, Under Secretary Assistant for Legal Affairs of MoSAL has presented the following topic: Migration dynamics in Kuwait: Challenges, Responses and Potentials.
- Brigadier Kamel Al-Awadi Director General of Immigration Affairs Department at MoI has presented the new Kuwaiti initiative on Management of Temporary Foreign Labour in Kuwait
- Three Labour attaches from Sri-Lanka, The Philippines, and Bangladesh embassies in Kuwait have presented three presentations on Protection of Workers: Role of Labour Attaches and Consular Officials.
- Site visit was carried out for all participants to MoSAL shelter for temporary foreign labour migrants in Kuwait.

### Invitees:

The event was attracted the attention of several foreign embassies in Kuwait and they sent representatives to attend the workshop including: USA, UK (donor), The Netherlands, Belgium, German, Georgian, Ethiopian, Pakistani embassies (and others).

UNCT has provided high level of support to the workshop. The UNRC Ms. Valerie cliff has attended the opening and closing ceremonies of the workshop. Several representatives from UN agencies in Kuwait have attended the workshop.

The Kuwaiti media representatives have shown up during the workshop and made a lot of interviews with Kuwaiti officials, IOM and civil society participants.

### WORKSHOP RECOMMENDATIONS:

The workshop has recommended several points to be addressed with relevant stakeholders. The workshop came up with key recommendations for Kuwait government for follow up as attached.

The following points were highlighted by workshop participants:

1. Participants welcome the significant progress that has been made in Kuwait regarding the development of mechanisms for the management of temporary contractual labour, and congratulate the Government of Kuwait, in particular the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labour under whose auspices this workshop has taken place; the Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Foreign Affairs who have actively encouraged the spirit of open dialogue throughout the workshop.
2. The Kuwaiti Government has reconfirmed its constitutional commitment to the protection of all citizens, including temporary contractual workers residing and working in Kuwait. Kuwait is a signatory to some key international conventions that protect the rights of temporary foreign workers and victims of trafficking; and the Government is implementing legislation in adherence to these norms.
3. This workshop has provided a first and unique opportunity for the various stakeholders to raise and address pertinent issues related to labour mobility. In particular participation was possible from significant civil society representatives, researchers and notable academics from Universities in Kuwait, labour attaches from the major origin countries to Kuwait, IGOs including representatives from the UN country team, and donor representatives.
4. In the continued spirit of open dialogue expressed during the Abu Dhabi Dialogue, IOM and the UN Country team welcome Kuwait's continued engagement and close collaboration with the international community on the important issue of temporary contractual labour in Kuwait, and express the hope that Kuwait will continue to work closely with IOM and other international organisations.
5. Within the framework of this workshop, inspired by the partnerships agreed upon in the Abu Dhabi Declaration which was adopted by the Government of Kuwait, participants discussed strengthening collaboration between countries of origin and Kuwait. Participants expressed hope that further opportunities will be created to enable the implementation of the declaration in full with the support of IOM in preparation for the next dialogue scheduled to take place in 2010.
6. The participants express their gratitude to IOM for its initiative in convening this workshop and to the Government of Kuwait for its support. IOM is grateful to the British Embassy in Kuwait for its generous contribution which has enabled this workshop to take place.

### DONOR INTEREST:

The donors have shown their interest to fund follow up activities based on the recommendations of this workshop. IOM will work closely with donor community to fund potential follow up activities.